

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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1. The potential radio listener in Bulgaria faces these handicaps:
 - a. The number of pre-1944 radio sets available is steadily decreasing, as replacement tubes have been scarce since then and very high prices are charged for even minor repairs.
 - b. Many villages are still without electric power. Dry or wet cell batteries are difficult to find, expensive, and have such a short life that they must be replaced very frequently. Most of the radio sets in such villages are not now in use.
 - c. New sets now offered for sale are either extremely expensive or are not complete sets, but merely loud-speakers which are connected to a "central" where the tuning or program selection is controlled.
2. One type of radio set now being sold is manufactured at the "Low Current Plant Kliment Voroshilov," located in a suburb of Sofia along the Sofia-Knyazhevo highway. These sets are capable of short, medium and long wave reception, and have about five tubes. The price of the set before the currency reform was 40,000 leva, a sum beyond the means of the average citizen, who earned perhaps only 10,000 leva per month and encountered very high food prices. The sets have usually remained unsold in shop windows or been purchased by Communists who occupy high positions. The system of installment buying is not customary in Bulgaria.
3. In January 1953 Radio Sofia announced that radio sets (trademark "Standard") were being imported from Czechoslovakia. These sets have long, medium and a special type of short wave (Razleti kusi vulni) reception.
4. The Communist regime is also distributing another type of "radio set," which is actually only a loud-speaker with "on-off" and volume controls, wired to a special

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"central" in which a master set is located. The owner of such a "radio set" can only hear that program which has been selected at the "central." When the owner of the set tires of the repetitious news programs or propaganda speeches, he cannot change the program, but can only turn the set off. In many cases, to turn the set off brings only slight relief, however, as the regime has erected powerful loudspeakers on many street corners in towns and villages, which can be heard by all persons in the vicinity.

5. In contrast to the real radio sets, these home loud-speakers are very cheap (exact price unknown) and their sale is widespread. The Communists take advantage of the common desire for music to introduce the propaganda-laden broadcasts of Radio Sofia.
6. These loud-speakers are produced in Bulgaria at the Low Current Plant "Kliment Voroshilov," where the "centrals" are also manufactured.
7. There is hardly a town or village of those which have been electrified in which such a loud-speaker "central" has not been installed. In those villages which are now being electrified, the loud-speaker wiring is installed at the same time as the electric wiring.
8. The loud-speaker systems are under the technical supervision of the local post offices. Usually the "centrals" are located in the post offices or very near to them.
9. Loud-speaker systems for homes had not been installed in Sofia by mid-1952, but [redacted] such systems in several towns, including Shumen, Popovo, Preslav and Omortag. Radio Sofia continually announces the "radiofication" of new villages and towns. For example, in a news broadcast on 7 February 1953, it was stated that in Stara Zagora oblast there are 8 town "centrals", 97 village "centrals," and 37 factory "centrals" and that 17,000 homes are connected to these "centrals."
10. A tax is levied each year on the owners of radio sets, which varies according to the size of the set. The tax in 1951 for a five-tube set was 1,350 leva (old money).

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